DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 090 737 EC 061 829

AUTHOR	Murphy, Lois B.; Leeper, Ethel M.
TITLE	Language Is for Communication. Caring for Children No. 10.
INSTITUTION	Child Development Services Bureau (DHEW/OCD), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO	DHEW-OCD-74-1035
PUB DATE	73
NOTE	29p.; For other booklets in the series see EC 052 600-604 and EC 061 825-828
AVAILABLE FROM	Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402 (Stock Number 1790-00016, $0.60)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	*Child Care Centers; *Communication Skills; *Early Childhood Education; *Exceptional Child Education; Handicapped Children; *Language Development; Language Role

ABSTRACT

Discussed are ways to develop language communication skills in preschool children attending a child care center. Examples of communication without words such as animal sounds and actions are given. Babies are seen to learn to talk through the aid of a mother and child care worker who decipher the signals and encourage babbling in infants and speech in young children. Considered in a section on speech difficulties are physical and mental defects, stuttering, effects of a silent home life, and shyness in young children. Child care workers are encouraged to help children learn to talk about their feelings. Described are ways a child can develop language skills in the child care center such as having a teacher who listens, being exposed to new words, engaging in conversation with children and adults, hearing and making up stories, singing, and getting ready for reading. The booklet stresses the importance of communication skills for a more tolerant society. (DB)

ED 090737

caring for children—number ten

LANGUAGE IS FOR COMMUNICATION

Preface 2
Acknowledgments 3
Communication without Words 5
Language of Animals 5
Actions Sometimes Speak Louder than Words 6
How Babies Learn to Talk 7
Mother Deciphers the Signals 7
Gooing and Cooing Pay Off 7
The Speech of Young Children 8
Speech Difficulties 10
Physical and Mental Defects 10
Early Life 11
Stuttering 11
Silent Home Life 12
Shyness 12
Talking about Feelings 12
Letting Off Steam 12
Words Can Lighten Trouble 14
Language Grows at the Child Care Center 14
Teacher Tunes In 14
Learning New Words 15
Conversation 16
Children Talking Together 19
Adults Talking Together 19
Sounds Lead the Way 19
Stories 20
Getting the Most Out of a Story 23
Making Up Stories 23
Their Own Books 24
Songs 24
Equipment to Promote Communication 27
Looking Forward to Written Words 27

DHEW Publication No. (OCD) 7[illegible]-1035

LOIS B. MURPHY, Ph.D.
ETHEL M. LEEPER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Photo Credits: Michael D. Sullivan
Lois B. Murphy
Dorothy Levens

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE of CHILD DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU of CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

SC 001829

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402 - Price 60 cents
Stock Number 1790-00016

preface

The influence of a good child care center is not limited to the children who are cared for, the staff itself, or the mothers who participate. Older and younger brothers and sisters, friends, neighbors, volunteers may all gain from changes brought about by the child care center. In some instances, the neighborhood is brightened up, inspired by the attractiveness of the center, and pride emerges to spark new efforts. School teachers and principals, ministers, and local agencies also grow more helpful, more interested in children.

This comes from the friendliness of the center staff to the whole family and to the neighbors. It also comes from the quality of every aspect of the child care center—the cheerful setting, the good food, the well-organized space for activity, the children's progress in learning and self-control, the experience of helping to improve the center itself and the neighborhood, the resulting good feelings, and a contagious sense of progress.

At one child care center on a dirt road full of deep ruts and holes, with some adjacent yards full of junk and neighboring houses in a run down condition, major changes occurred. The city street department improved the road; the real estate agent repaired and painted nearby houses while resident owners painted their own; and volunteers from the police department cleaned up the junk. Yards bare and full of scraggly weeds were seeded and made neat. It all takes effort, but the response releases new energy.

Thus child care centers have the opportunity of providing massive help for the nation's children through contributing to wholesome physical, mental, and social development, and also to an improved environment for the children. The child in a good center all day will receive good food, exercise, and rest to build a healthy body, as well as assistance in correction of physical problems.

Through constant communication with teachers and aides, language is developed, vocabulary is enlarged naturally, thought is stimulated, and a healthy self-concept evolves. Use of toys and other play and work materials involves exercise and development of sensory-motor skills, along with many concepts of color, size, shape, weight, balance, structure, and design. Stories and songs encourage integration of feelings, action, and ideas, while developing imagination.

Spontaneous play in the housekeeping corner or with blocks allows the child to play out his observations of the family and the community. Other children may broaden their ideas and skills through watching and joining in the play.

Neither health, nor adequate mental development, nor constructive social behavior can be guaranteed for the rest of the child's life if the following years do not also meet his needs adequately. But good total development in childhood can provide prerequisites for further growth and can help to prevent the beginnings of retardation, disorganized behavior, early delinquency, and emotional disturbance.

acknowledgments

I owe most to two groups of workers with young children: first, my former colleagues at Sarah Lawrence College, who taught the children at the Sarah Lawrence Nursery School—Evelyn Beyer, long time director of the nursery school, and Marian Gay, Rebekah Shuey, and also colleagues at Bank Street College for Teachers with whom at different times I shared teaching and research experiences. But in addition, I owe much to the directors and teachers of many nursery schools and day care centers across America and around the world. Especially exciting to me were the Basic Education schools of India, initiated by Gandhi and Zakir Hussain; and Bal Ghar in Ahmedabad, India—a unique integration of the best American nursery school concepts, Montessori principles, Basic Education, and some traditional Indian patterns, organized with a special balance of good structure and flexibility that I came to know as Kamalini Sarabhai's genius.

I am equally grateful to the creative staff of the North Topeka Day Care Center—Josephine Nesbitt and Forestine Lewis, who "dreamed up" the center to meet the needs of deprived children in their area; and among the intercultural group of teachers and directors, Sarita Peters, Mary Wilson, Jane Kemp, Connie Garcia, Chris Smith —each of whom had special talents in handling the children, stimulating and supporting their growth. Cecile Anderson has been especially generous in sharing her unique story—techniques, observations of children's favorite stories, and ways of looking at children's constructiveness and pride in achievement. Among the volunteers, Lillian Morrow was an inspiration to all of us with her sensitive, skillful, and quietly warm ways, and Carol Rousey contributed expert and helpful assessments of the children's speech and language development.

The leadership of the local OEO director, Robert Harder, and later J. A. Dickinson, stimulated staff, parents and neighbors, Girl Scouts, occupational therapy groups in local hospitals to help paint, plant shrubbery, build outdoor play equipment, provide toys so as to make possible a pleasant and well-furnished environment for learning and for total development. Shirley Norris, director of Kansas State Day Care, Anna Ransom, wise dean of Topeka day care efforts, and Mr. S. Revely, the local realtor who renovated the neighborhood houses for the Center, all gave time, energy, and warm interest to the development of the Center.

I also want to express my appreciation to the responsive mothers whose progress along with that of their children gave me a new understanding of human potentialities in children and adults of all ethnic groups in America and the urgency of making it possible for these to be expressed.

These guidelines were initiated by Dr. Caroline Chandler, former Chief, Children's Mental Health Section, National Institute of Mental Health, and were supported by PHS Grant R12-MH9266, the Menninger Foundation, and Children's Hospital of the District of Columbia. They were prepared under the supervision of Mrs. Franc Balzer, former Director of Head Start's Parent and Child Center Program.

Lois B. Murphy, Ph.D.

LANGUAGE IS FOR COMMUNICATION

Human beings are born with a desire to communicate with other human beings. They do this in many ways. A smile communicates a friendly feeling; a clenched fist, anger; tears, sorrow. From the first days of life, babies express pain or hunger by cries and actions. Gradually they add expressions of pleasure and smiles when a familiar person comes near. They begin to reach out to be picked up.

Human beings also use words to communicate. Babies eventually learn the words of their parents. If the parents speak in English, the baby will learn to speak English. If the parents speak Spanish, their baby will speak Spanish. An American baby who is taken away from his own parents and brought up by a family who speaks Chinese, Urdu, Swahili, or any other language, will learn the language of the people around him instead of English.

Whatever the language, once young children learn to use it, the doors to communication open wider. Children then can tell other people what they want, how they feel, and who they are. At the same time, they can understand the words of other people and absorb new knowledge.

Words are important tools of learning. Children can ask questions and understand the answers; they can tell about their discoveries and express their likes and dislikes. A knowledge of language helps a child to develop complex processes of thinking and to find solutions to problems.

Words also help children grow socially. A child who cannot use language to communicate with others remains locked away in his own little world. No one knows what he wants to do or what his particular needs are because he cannot tell them. As the children around him become more proficient at language, they talk

together. Friendships grow. But the silent child without language is out of it. The other children are likely to ignore him or ever make fun of him. He falls farther and farther behind.

Learning to speak is an important step toward learning to read. Children who cannot speak their language clearly have difficulties learning the written language. They are poor readers in school. As they advance to harder subjects, they must be able to read textbooks in history, geography, social studies, and science. Even math books are full of problems and explanations that must be read. Much of our education is based on language. The child who cannot use his language comfortably and freely is handicapped throughout his entire school life.

We must go back to the beginnings to see that young children have a solid base of language. In the relaxed and warm atmosphere of a loving home or good child care center, language can develop naturally. Every normal child has the ability to speak a language well. But each needs encouragement from the grownups around him. Each one must be allowed to speak and must know that someone is listening.

communication without words

Language of Animals—Man may be the only animal to use spoken or written words to communicate, but he is not the only animal that is able to communicate. Every dog lover knows that animals can reveal their feelings quite clearly. A dog wags its tail, and by this action it says, "I'm happy you're home again." It jumps up at the master's legs and begs, "Please pet me." One dog ran to the kitchen every time someone opened the refrigerator door and sat patiently in front of it waiting for a snack. Dogs can express all these meanings without a word or even a bark.

Of course, dogs have lived with man for many, many years, so it may be natural that they have learned to communicate with their human masters. Do animals in nature communicate with one another as well? They certainly do. A starling will give out a danger cry to alert the entire flock when it sees a hawk or other enemy. On hearing the cry, the flock flies away.

Bees tell one another about the nectar they have found by doing a special dance. One movement says that the nectar is close by. A different movement says the nectar is far away and even informs the other bees how far away.[1]

Many animals communicate to attract a mate and ensure a new generation. Grasshoppers and crickets search for a mate by singing songs that only other grasshoppers and crickets can understand. Butterflies recognize members of the opposite sex by their colors and movements. Some fish develop bright colors in the mating season to attract a mate, but are dull and difficult to see at other times of the year to protect them from their enemies.

Penguins look like little men in tuxedos and in many ways act like humans. They mate for life. The male and females are separated for

[1] **Signals in the Animal World**, Dietrich Burkhardt, Wolfgang Schleidt, Helmut Altner and collaborators, tr. Kenneth Morgan, McGraw Hill Book Co., New York, Toronto, London, Sydney, 1967.

long periods of time with one staying at the nest to protect the egg while the other goes to sea in search of food. When the missing mate returns, the birds identify one another again by the sound of their trilling voices. If a male approaches a strange female with his song, he is likely to get pecked. If he finds his own mate, she recognizes his song and welcomes him to the nest.

Children love to imitate animals. It's so much fun to stomp around the room like a herd of elephants or flit daintily like a flock of sparrows. Teacher might play a game by asking the children how an animal shows his feelings.

"Now you are robins, and a cat is trying to catch your babies. What do you do?" The children squawk like angry robins. This way they learn that feelings can be expressed in many ways, and that animals have their own ways of communicating.

Actions Sometimes Speak Louder than Words— You are in a foreign country where no one understands your language. You are hungry. You ask a passerby to direct you to a restaurant. He looks bewildered. You speak louder. He shakes his head. No use. He doesn't understand the words you are using. What do you do? You rub your stomach to show hunger. You hold up your hands in a helpless gesture and look all around as if searching for a place to eat. You pretend to put food into your mouth. Now he catches your meaning and leads you to a restaurant. Inside you point to the food you want. You manage to get by, but it has been a frustrating experience. You would not have used gestures if your words had been understood.

Every day in less demanding situations we use actions to convey simple thoughts even though the people around us understand our language. We laugh, smile, or chuckle when something amuses us; we put our fingers to our lips as a signal to be quiet; we raise our eyebrows to show surprise; and nod our heads to show agreement. We could say these same things in words, but sometimes the appropriate gesture says it better. We are communicating without words.

There are times when words are clumsy and even annoying. When someone suffers a deep sorrow, words often seem empty. What can you say to a child whose mother or father has just died? Not much that will take away the grief.

Thoughts can be conveyed without words by facial expressions or body movements.

You can sit close and show by your presence that you care. A touch of the hand may say more than an eloquent speech.

Young children who may not know enough words to say all they want to say use many signals. Watch them on the playground. Sam tugs at teacher's hand and pulls her to see a bluejay in the tree. Teresa beckons with her finger for Ralph to follow her. Kitty climbs on her teacher's lap and gives her a hug. All these children expressed their thoughts and feelings without using words.

Games where the children act out meanings without words can help them learn more ways of communicating.

"What do I mean when I do this?" teacher asks as she yawns.

"You're sleepy."

"That's right, Maria. Now it's your turn. You do something." Maria waves.

"That means 'hello,'" Julian calls out.

Even though it is extremely important for children to learn to speak well, it is also useful for them to be able to communicate through gestures at times when words aren't appropriate.

how babies learn to talk

Mother Deciphers the Signals—From the time he is born, an infant begins to communicate. By one signal or another he is able to give his mother information she needs to make him comfortable. His cries tell her he is hungry or uncomfortable. His mouth begins to "work" as if he wants to suck on a nipple. He can't talk, or walk, or even gurgle at first, but he can communicate his needs.

Mother hears his cries, picks him up, and immediately his mouth starts "rooting" or groping for the nipple. After feeding, mother puts her baby back in his bed, but a few minutes later he cries again. This time he pulls his legs up against his stomach and stretches them out again in frantic movements. "Burp me," his cries and actions say. "I have a pain in my tummy." Mother understands the signals and holds him up to her shoulder, petting his back until the gas comes up.

Within a few weeks or months, an attentive mother knows by the cry what her baby is trying to tell her. There is the shrill scream of pain, or the demanding cry of hunger, or the steady fussiness that means "I'm bored. Play with me." A baby might cry in one tone to announce that his diapers need changing or in a different tone when he is tired.

By the time a baby is four or five months old, he has discovered that he can make other sounds with his mouth besides crying. He learns to gurgle, laugh, blow bubbles, and coo. These sounds express pleasure and interest, and gradually they take him a step closer to talking. Now he also pays attention to the voices of others and turns his head in their direction.

Gooing and Cooing Pay Off—Towards the end of the first year, a baby makes a startling discovery. He finds out that a sound he has made brings him something good.

"Ma-ma, ma-ma," Timmy says. He looks at his mother and smiles. "Ma-ma."

Mother is overjoyed. "My big boy's calling his Mama," she croons. She picks him up and hugs him closely while she does a little dance around the room. "Now, say it again . . . Mama, Mama."

Timmy is overjoyed too. He's not quite sure what he did to bring about such an affectionate response, but he is willing to try it again.

"Ma-ma, ma-ma," he says. Both mother and baby are happy.

Timmy begins to discover that many of his sounds bring rewards. Daddy smiles extra warmly when Timmy says "da-da." Mother gives him a bottle when he says "ba-ba" and a cookie when he says "ka-ka." Even sister Angela, who didn't like Timmy when he was born, gives him a kiss when he says "hi" to her.

Timmy tries other sounds. Mother listens and tries to match Timmy's sounds to words. Sometimes she can, as she did when he said "wa-wa," and she gave him a drink of water.

Sometimes she can't. Gradually, more and more of Timmy's sounds have meaning to himself and the people around him. He has begun to communicate by words.

He still needs lots and lots of practice and much encouragement. He needs to feel that someone understands his words and will respond to them. He needs someone to play "pat-a-cake" with him and show pleasure when he says "pat," or someone to turn the pages of a picture book and say the names of the objects over and over. "Timmy see the baby. Ba-by. Ba-by."

One person Timmy does **not** need is a chatterbox. Some parents are so anxious for their children to talk that they steamroller them with words and sentences. Even the most intelligent baby learns only one word at a time. If a well-meaning adult bombards him with too many words, the child is likely to become confused and stop speaking. Speech has to be a two-way street. Timmy needs to hear words, but he also has to have a chance to use them.

Babies have a way of holding back when someone nags them. Many proud mothers have tried to show their babies off with words like, "Come on, Timmy, say bow-wow. Show Nana you can say 'bow-wow'." But more often than not Timmy will clam up like a mummy, leaving mother to explain feebly, "I can't understand it, he says it all the time at home in his play pen."

Children who are learning to talk need adults to encourage them in a relaxed way. They will show Timmy that they understand his words, but they will not criticize his mistakes. There is time for Timmy to correct his pronunciation and grammar after he first learns to use words.

What happens if nobody recognizes that "ma-ma" is Mama or "da-da" is Daddy? What would Timmy have done if his mother hadn't shown him that some of his sounds had meaning? He may have lost his desire to try new sounds. He may have been content with meaningless babble or he may even have stopped babbling because nobody showed him that sounds could be used to communicate. Often babies who did not receive approval at their first baby words turn into silent, brooding children by the age of three. When children like this come to a child care center, teacher must give them more help than she would give to the Timmys, whose parents supported their first efforts at speech.

The Speech of Young Children—"I'm gonna get me a shovel. I'm gonna get me a shovel. I want a shovel. I want a shovel. Here's a shovel. It's my shovel. I'm gonna dig with this shovel. I'm gonna dig a hole with this shovel. I'm gonna dig a big hole with this shovel."

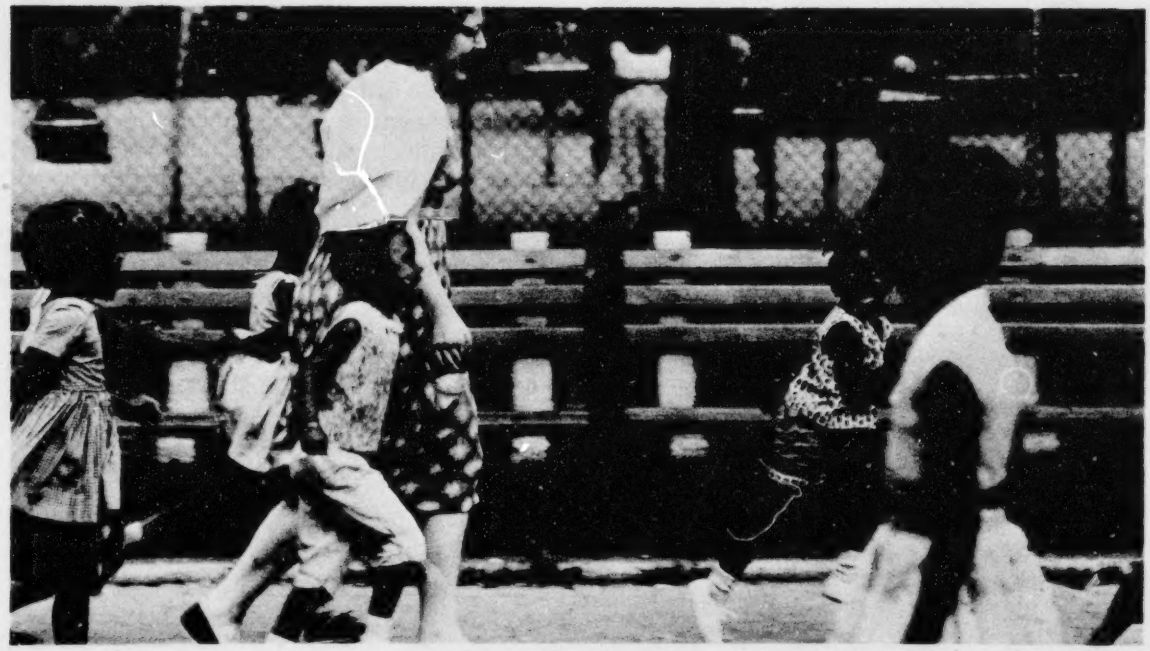
Daniel was playing alone in the sandbox. Who was he talking to? Himself! It isn't strange for young children to talk to themselves. This is the way they practice using words. They say them over and over until their tongues and lips learn how to pronounce the syllables automatically and correctly. Repetition also gives them practice in putting words together. Daniel varied his sentences slightly but stuck to the subject of his shovel.

Inside the child care center, Carrie was pasting leaves to a piece of construction paper. While she worked, she absent-mindedly hummed a rhythm beat to herself, "Tum-tum-de-tum-tum-de-tum. . . ."

Ramon was working out how to put a roof on his garage. "Now I'll put this block on here like this." The block tumbled down. "Why did you do that you bad block? I know. You're too little. I'll get a bigger one. I'll put it like this, and it'll stay." He succeeds. Talking to himself helped him solve his problem.

In the housekeeping corner four children were talking to a visitor who didn't fit on the child-sized chairs. Their conversation soon turned into a chant:

"Didju ever fit on a little chair?"
"Yes."
"Didju go to school?"
"Yes."
"Didju have a mommy?"
"Yes."
"Didju have a daddy?"
"Yes."
"Didju have a bed?"
"Yes."
"You didn't have no big hands?"
"No."
"You didn't have no glasses?"
"No."
"You didn't have no car?"
"No."
"You didn't have no big shoes?"
"No."
"You couldn't read?"
"No."



Speech develops early in some children, later in others, and teacher learns how to communicate with each one.

"You couldn't write?"
"No."
"You couldn't always button?"
"No."
At this point teacher joined the group.
"You could learn."
"Yes."
"You could play."
"Yes."
"You could talk."
"Yes."

With a listener who obviously was interested, the children were able to make up a game with the words they knew. The visitor caught the spirit of the game and stayed to answer their questions, giving the children an opportunity to practice using words.

Children love to make sounds. The sounds may be words, or nonsense syllables, or rhythm chants, or the rustling of paper. Often sounds are annoying to adults while giving pleasure to children. "Stop tapping your feet while you eat, Mike," mother may order. The tapping bothers mother, but Mike is not even aware he is doing it.

This is one reason why music and rhythmic exercises are so important in a child care center. A child who responds with enjoyment to sounds, is likely to find similar pleasure in words when he grows older.

Teacher usually isn't sure what Tommy is talking about because his conversation never seems to fit the situation at hand. While doing a puzzle, he is likely to come out with, "We don't want none today."

"What don't you want any of?" teacher asks.

"Dunno." And with a shrug of his shoulders, Tommy is silent again.

Even in a child with poor speech, there are some signs that teacher can look for that may indicate healthy speech development in the future:

—Does the child respond with enjoyment to sounds, poetry, dramatic play, stories, and music?
—Does the child call his teacher freely by name?
—Is the child able to understand, remember, and respond to the speech of others?
—Does the child seek answers to questions?

When children come to a child care center, they come with all levels of speech

development. One child may speak in long sentences with correct grammar and good pronunciation, like Philip, who told the teacher, "I don't have a hammer." Most of Philip's playmates said, "I don't have no hammer." At the other extreme may be the child who answers with grunts and never begins a conversation. In between are all shades of good and poor speech. There's Dorita who talks so fast that her words tumble out in a torrent of sounds that cannot be understood. And there's Andy, who usually greets everyone with "Punch your nose in." His fierce sentences are a clue to the anger he feels toward his world.

—Does the child like stories, discussions, and conversations for sharing thoughts as well as for learning facts?
—Does the child try to talk out his conflicts and worries?
—Does he set limits on other children who are interfering with his play?

Teachers can help young children learn to talk by treating them the same way many mothers do at home. **Talk with, not at, the child. Give him the courtesy of listening.** When a child pronounces a word wrong or uses poor grammar, do not correct him on the spot, but repeat his sentence correctly. The teacher did this in responding to Tommy's, "We don't want none today." Her answer, "What don't you want any of?" let Tommy hear his sentence said correctly without being told he was wrong. Children do not like to be embarrassed by constant reminders that they are making errors. Interruptions by adults to correct their speech also disrupt their thoughts. At the same time, most children by the age of three or four want to say words the right way. If they hear good spoken language, eventually they will copy it.

Sometimes children know how to talk but are too bashful to speak in front of strangers. "You should hear her talk at home," mother is likely to exclaim when teacher tells her that Sandra won't open her mouth at the center. Sandra probably needs more time alone with teacher or an aide until she gains her confidence. One teacher made arrangements for an older sister to stay with a two-and-a-half-year-old for a few days to help break the ice. When the younger child relaxed and began to speak, the older child returned to her group.

First off, teacher has to convince children that she wants them to talk. Children, who have been told to "shut up" over and over again at home, may feel they have nothing to say that is worth listening to. By her actions in listening and responding to a child's talk, teacher can demonstrate that, at least at the child care center, children are not only allowed to talk but are **urged to** talk. Once children get the idea that being able to talk is a desirable skill, they are likely to continue to improve in speech. Specific activities to aid language development in a child care center are described in the section, "Language Grows at the Child Care Center," beginning on page **24.**

speech difficulties

Physical and Mental Defects—Most children are able to use a few words by the time they are two years old and simple sentences or phrases by the time they are three. However, if a child reaches three-and-a-half without speaking, it is time to find out what is interfering with normal language development.

There may be any number of reasons. One of the most common is poor hearing. Children learn to speak by mimicking the sounds they hear. If they hear no sounds or only jumbled sounds, they cannot learn to speak in the same way children with normal hearing do. A hearing aid may improve hearing enough to allow them to distinguish sounds and begin to learn to speak. However, children with severe hearing handicaps usually need help from special teachers before they learn to speak.

If the hearing is normal, a physical examination may reveal some defect in the structure of the mouth or palate which can be corrected by surgery or therapy. Mental retarda-

tion may be another cause of slow speech development.

Early Life—Many children have no obvious physical or mental deficiencies, yet they cannot speak well. The cause may lie in their early life at home. Were these babies cared for by persons who were deaf, or ill, or retarded? When they were just beginning to make cooing sounds, were these babies ignored? Were they left alone by the hour without hearing human voices or seeing friendly faces?

Were these speechless children shocked by some terrifying event that took place as they were learning to speak? The death of the mother or another loved person could cause speech difficulties. The shock of a disaster, such as an earthquake or flood, could cause a young child to become mute. Harsh toilet training during which the child was shamed or even punished for soiling his pants has been known to interfere with speech development.

Many speech problems are not so severe. Some may be easily corrected like Marlene's. "My Mommy 'ays I'm a baby so I'v oo 'alk li' a baby." This was her explanation for refusing to repeat words after the teacher who was trying to help her pronounce more clearly. Teacher told Marlene's mother why the four-year-old girl was still talking baby talk. She suggested that if Marlene's mother stopped treating her like a baby, Marlene might want to talk like a four-year-old. An improvement in Marlene's speech showed up in a few weeks, and she continued to improve until soon everyone could understand her.

Stuttering—This is another common problem among small children. In the early years of speech, it is normal for a child to repeat words or have difficulty getting a word out. A child is likely to stumble on words because his tongue and lips have had very little practice in speaking. When a child is excited or frightened, he is even more likely to stutter.

Many adults lose patience with a stuttering child. "Slow down! "Start over! Now say it without stuttering!" they sometimes scold. This response only upsets the child more so that his stuttering gets worse.

Here are a few simple suggestions for preventing stuttering and for helping children develop good speech:

—Do all you can to be the kind of listener your children like to talk to.

—Give them time to talk without pressure to say the words correctly.

—Don't expect too much of them. Remember, they are very young. Accept childish speech, fumbling skills, along with high spirited and sometimes noisy behavior.

Teacher listens closely and watches for signals to catch the meaning of what the child is saying.

—When children stutter, take this as a sign that something in the surroundings may be worrying them. Make every day as simple and dependable as you can.
—Prepare them ahead of time for new experiences by talking about what is going to happen so that they feel more secure.
—Be sure they have plenty of rest.
—Speak to them in normal tones—not too loud nor too soft—and **not too fast.**
—Listen when they speak, even though it takes them a long time to express a thought.

If stuttering is handled in a relaxed way at the age of three or four, it will likely disappear as the child grows older. However, if the adults around the child put too much pressure on him to stop stuttering, the habit may continue into adulthood.

Silent Home Life—Sometimes children do not speak well because they do not hear much conversation at home. In some homes the adults are tired or sick and do not feel like talking with children. They may say a word or two to tell the child it is time to eat or time to get ready for school. There is no conversation about what the child did in school or about the other children he plays with. There are children in child care centers who have a rich vocabulary of curse words, but do not know how to ask for a drink of water.

When a child's experience is narrow, his speech has to be narrow as well. If Roberto has never seen nor tasted a peach, he will not know the word "peach." Children who are surrounded by many objects and who are taken to see new places and are encouraged to try out different materials usually learn the words for the things they are doing and seeing.

Shyness—Teachers will find some shy children will not speak for the first few weeks they are at a child care center. This does not necessarily mean they have speech difficulties. They may simply be too bashful to talk to strangers. Give the newcomer lots of attention and make him feel welcome. If he still does not speak after a month or so, the teacher and staff members may be wise in looking for a deeper reason.

talking about feelings

Letting off Steam—The water in a whistling tea kettle boils. The steam pushes out through the hole at the end of the spout. The whistle blows announcing that the water is ready for making tea or coffee. What happens if the hole in the spout gets clogged up? The steam has no way to escape. It collects inside the kettle. After a while, it builds up so much pressure, it blows the end of the spout off and spurts boiling water all over.

People are something like tea kettles. When they get angry, the anger has to find a way out just as the steam has to escape from the kettle. It can come out peacefully, like the steam in the kettle with the whistle hole open. But if people hide their angry feelings, the anger builds up inside. Sooner or later it will blow out forceably like the steam in the clogged up kettle. People have to learn how to let off steam in a peaceful way.

Babies kick and scream and tense their bodies when they are angry. As they grow older they learn new ways of letting off steam. A two-year-old will bite, scratch, shove, pull hair, or throw himself down on the floor and shriek when he can't have his way. Some have even been known to hold their breath until they turn blue. When a two-year-old sees something he wants, he grabs it.

Words can be a peaceful way to let off steam. Our language has many expressions that deal with anger. "I'm so mad I could eat nails." "I'm as mad as a wet hen." These words don't make much sense, but just saying them lets some of the anger out and makes us feel better. Of course, children who cannot speak cannot give vent to their anger this way. Therefore it is important that children learn how to tell other people what is bothering them. Many annoying situations can be corrected if children can com-

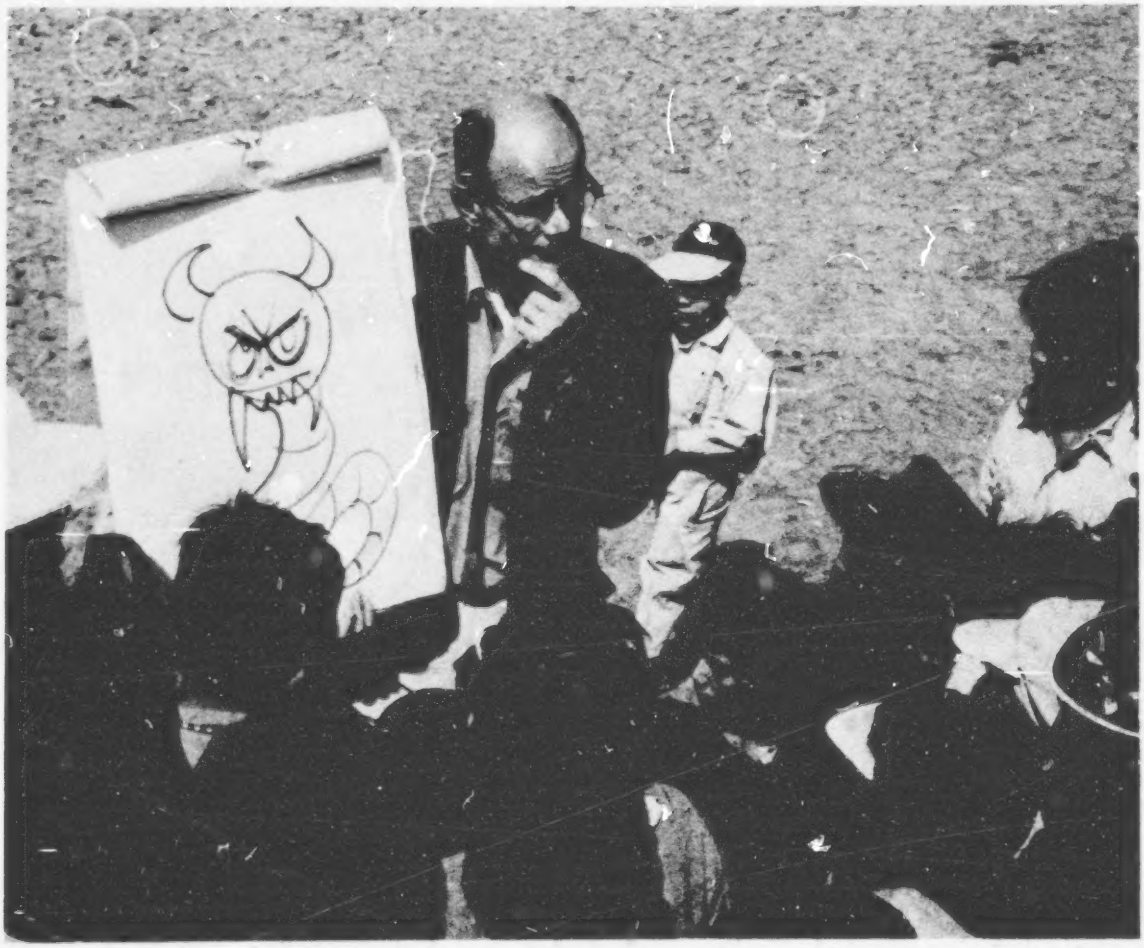
municate with someone about them.

Lucinda was hungry because there was no food at home for breakfast. She was angry about her discomfort when she arrived at the child care center. Her bad disposition got her into two battles with other children before the snack was served. After snacktime, she felt better and became a cooperative member of the group. If she could have told her teacher, "I'm hungry. May I have something to eat now?" she could have satisfied her hunger before she caused any disturbance.

Nell came to school whining about everything. "Andy pulled my hair! Beatrice stuck her tongue out at me. Mary's wearing my apron." Nothing made her happy. Nell was acting like this because she was too tired to play with the other children. A loud quarrel between her mother and father had kept her awake last night, and she needed sleep. If she could have told this to the teacher, she could have taken an early nap in another room and spared herself and others a miserable morning.

It may take months of talking with each child before they can use words instead of grabbing and hitting. If Bobby can learn to say, "Don't run here. You'll knock down my garage," he is better off than if he says nothing until the garage falls down, then beats up the child who caused the accident.

When Francisco can say, "I want to play with the beanbag. Will you play with me, Nathan?" he doesn't need violence to get what he wants.



Teacher can encourage the children to express themselves in words by talking about her own feelings and experiences.

Until that day arrives, teacher may have to explain to Francisco dozens of times, "I can't let you take that beanbag away from Nathan. He was playing with it. I won't let anyone take anything away from you either. The next time you want something, ask for it. Say 'Nathan, may I play with you and the beanbag?' "

A reminder: Children learn more from what adults do than from what they say. Teacher's words will be useless if she allows herself to lose her temper. A teacher who tells children to talk about the things that make them mad, then turns around and hits a child who annoys her, actually is giving the children a lesson in violent, not peaceful, behavior.

Words Can Lighten Trouble—Just as words give us a way of getting rid of anger, so words can help us feel better when life seems almost too much to bear. If we can tell a sympathetic person what is troubling us, our troubles seem to grow lighter.

Many things happen in a young child's life to worry him. The death of a loved one is never easy, but a child may think it is the end of his world. Young children have so little experience in living that they don't understand that life goes on and time heals grief.

Talking won't bring grandmother back, but it may help Andrea to accept her loss. Teacher might use words like these: "Andrea, I know you are sad and lonely without Grandma. You loved her very much.

"Mommy says she don't hurt no more."

"Mommy's right, Andrea. Your Grandma doesn't hurt any more."

"I'm scared when Grandma's away."

"I know you are. But Mommy and Aunt Tessie will see that nothing harms you. They love you and will look after you."

Telling about a trip to the hospital or dentist can help a child forget painful experiences.

"The dentist's thing went 'buzz' and it hurt awful," John told his teacher when he returned from having a tooth filled.

"I know the drilling can hurt," teacher said sympathetically. "But it doesn't hurt any more, does it?"

"Not now, but it hurt then."

John was able to use words to let teacher know how much it hurt. Then satisfied that she sympathized with him, he was ready to forget his trip to the dentist.

A child who cannot use words to express his feelings probably will show his anxiety in some other way. Some children become belligerent and pick fights with anyone who crosses their paths. Others may withdraw from the group and refuse to take part in the activities of the center. Many children return to babyish habits, like wetting their pants or sucking their thumbs, when they are worried. When a teacher notices that a child's behavior has changed, she might try to talk with him alone in a friendly and understanding manner to help him put his troubles into words.

Communication works two ways. When a child is able to put his worries into words, it makes him feel better inside. At the same time, it gives other people an understanding of what is troubling him so that they know what help he needs.

language grows at the child care center

Teacher Tunes In—A new teacher who is not used to the speech of young children may have trouble understanding them at first. Many of them, particularly the two-and-a-half and three-year-olds, still use babytalk. As teacher gets to know each child, she will get tuned in to each child's way of speaking. She will have to listen closely and watch for signals to catch the meaning of what a child says. The vocabulary of a young child is small, and he may not know all the correct words.

"C'n I ha' dat?" may be the only way Roger knows to ask for something. Teacher begins pointing and naming objects until she finds out that Roger's "dat" is a wooden boat on the top shelf where he can't reach it.

"Oh, Roger, you want the boat. Can you say 'boat'?"

Roger didn't answer. "Maybe you'll feel like saying it next time," teacher said brightly.

Although teacher did not understand Roger's request, she did not ignore it. She showed him that she was interested in what he said by staying with him until she discovered his meaning. Roger now knows that being able to talk is useful at the child care center because it gets him what he wants. In the future, he may be more willing to try new words.

As a teacher learns to know each child well, she becomes familiar with the babytalk. She remembers that Karl says "tinkle" when he wants to go to the toilet, and Rosita says "summa" when she wants another helping. When teacher talks with Roger, who doesn't know many words, she emphasizes the names of objects, like, "Would you like to do this **puzzle,** Roger?" or "Is the **ice cream** cold?" However, when she talks with Sam, who speaks well for his age, she emphasizes descriptive words to give him a richer vocabulary. "Do you want this **round** block, Sam, or would you **rather** have this **square** one?" To Angie, who gets upset easily, teacher uses words to help her express her feelings. "You get **mad** when Julio sticks his tongue out at you, don't you Angie? **Tell him you don't like it. Tell** him to **stop** or you won't play with him any more."

By tuning in to each child, a teacher is able to offer the help each one needs to communicate better through language.

Learning New Words—Words are the building blocks of good speech. After a baby learns to communicate by the sounds he makes, his language grows as fast as he can learn new words. During the years from three to five, children learn thousands of common words before they can describe everything they see and do and feel. Every situation in a child care center calls for different words. It is up to the teacher and her aide to supply the words for each activity.

On the jungle gym: "Put your foot on the **bottom rung** like this. (Teacher places Karen's foot.) Hold onto this rung with your hands. Now put your foot on the **next rung.** See **how high** you are! You're **way up high.**"

Karen repeats the word "high."

"Do you want to go **higher**? Move your hands up to the **top rung** and put your feet on this rung. Now **see how high** you are."

Although Karen did not say anything more than "high," teacher supplied her with words she will want to use later when she talks about her experiences on the jungle gym. Words that tell about space and distance, like "high," "low," "up," or "down," are important to learn.

On a walk: "The **traffic light** is **red.** We must **stop.** Now it is **green.** We must **look both ways** to be sure all the **cars** have **stopped.** Let's go now."

Celebrating a child's birthday: "Ray is **four years old** today. My, he is getting **big.** Just think, **next year** he'll be **even bigger.** Soon all of you will be **so big** you will go to school. You won't be **little** children any more."

Painting: "Lisa may use the **red paint** first, and George may use **green.** When you have finished with these **colors,** you may **trade.** That means George will **paint** with **red paint,** and Lisa will **paint** with **green.** Here are some **brushes.**"

When a child knows what he wants but doesn't know how to ask for it, he is likely to become frustrated. If Roger had been able to say, "I want that boat," teacher would have given it to him immediately. Children feel more secure when they know the words to tell an adult important information about themselves, like "I have to go to the toilet," or "Watch me jump off the chair," or, "My head hurts," or "I want to make a clay doggie."

Don't expect children to start using the words they hear right away. It takes a while for new words to become part of their speech. If they continue to hear a rich vocabulary, they will first understand what is said to them, then begin to use the same words.

Children can be stubborn about talking when an adult tells them to. One teacher told this story:[2]

"I s'eeping," a little boy said as he laid his head down on his hand.

"So I see," his teacher answered. "Say sleeping."

The child said nothing.

The teacher made the sound for "sl." Still no response from the child. "You can say it another time," the teacher said.

---

[2] This anecdote was related by Barbara Biber, of the Bank Street College of Education, in a paper, "Concerning Rationale and Practice in a Preschool Project for Disadvantaged Children," prepared for a meeting of Head Start Regional Training Officers.

That afternoon as he was getting on the bus to go home, he grinned at his teacher and said, "Sleeping," as clearly as she had said it several hours earlier.

This teacher wisely dropped the issue when she saw the child did not want to respond. Too much pressure from an adult can have the opposite effect of discouraging a child from wanting to speak better.

Conversation—Conversation means talking together. During a normal day at a child care center each child may take part in many conversations with teachers and other children. Often it is up to the teacher to strike up a conversation on some subject. A teacher who can put her personal feelings and warmth into a conversation is more likely to draw expressions of feeling out of the children.

"I had the nicest surprise when I got home yesterday," Mrs. Goodwin began when the children were sitting on the rug after their morning snack. "I was cooking dinner and I heard a soft 'meow' outside the door. What do you think it was?"

"A cat. A kitty," the children called out.

"Yes. It was a darling, fluffy white kitten with black paws."

"I got a black cat at home," Ricky announced.

"I got a big dog that will eat your cat," Annie joined in.

"My Aunt Peggy has a big cat and her got kittens," Terry told everyone.

"I wish I had a soft kitty," Wilma sighed. "Tell your aunt to give me one."

Mrs. Goodwin's opening statements sparked off a lively conversation about cats and dogs. She let the children talk together, answered them when they asked her a question, but did not interrupt them. In fact, she never did finish telling them about her own kitten, but it didn't matter. Her story had served her purpose. It had given the children a subject for conversation.

Some adults find it difficult to start a conversation with a child. One of the easiest openings is to comment on a child's work. General comments that do not demand a response are best. "You rolled that clay into a nice, round ball, Jimmy," or "You made a pretty purple color with your red and blue paint, Della."

It is better not to ask a child what he made. In the first place, he may think that the lines and circles he drew look exactly like a man, and his feelings may be hurt if an adult doesn't recognize it as a man too. Secondly, a child may dabble in clay or paint just to make a pleasing pattern or because it makes him feel good. He may not have started out to make an object he could name. When an adult asks him to put a label on his work and he can't, he may feel his work is no good.

Another way to open a conversation might be: "What a pretty purple picture, Della. Would you like to tell me about it?" That way Della can say it is a picture of a man or a horse or whatever it is. She won't be disappointed by an adult's clumsy guessing.

Most people enjoy conversation at mealtime. Friendly talk seems to come naturally when people sit around a table together and enjoy the pleasure of eating tasty food. Yet many adults tell children, "Be quiet and eat." In many homes and child care centers children are not allowed to talk while they are eating.

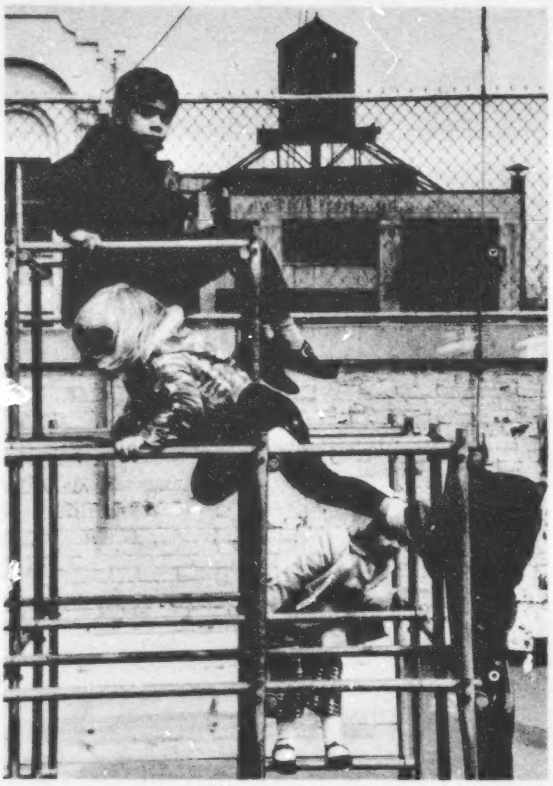
Healthy children burn up so much energy in their play that they get very hungry. They look forward to lunch and snacks as highlights in their day. If they are encouraged to communicate with one another by talking while they are enjoying good food, they may begin to find satisfaction in good speech as well.

Of course, teacher cannot allow her children to talk while their mouths are full of food. She doesn't want anyone to choke. Neither does she want anyone to talk so much that he doesn't eat his lunch. She may have to remind Anthony to "Wait until you have swallowed what you are chewing before you talk," or to tell Sandy, "Your chicken is getting cold. Eat a piece now and talk to Kathy again after you have finished it." If mealtimes are not rushed and the atmosphere is relaxed, most children will have time to eat and converse.

The food they are eating is an easy subject for conversation. Many young children do not know the names of different foods. Teacher can supply the names and use words that describe them.

"Aren't these **fluffy mashed potatoes** good! They are really yummy with **gravy.** The **milk** is so **creamy** and **cold.** Goodness, these **pickles** are **sour.**"

While helping the children learn new



"You're way up high. Hold tight," says teacher, using words that the child will want to use in describing climbing experiences.

words, teacher can also give them opportunities for putting their likes and dislikes into words.

"Don't you like your **lettuce**, Dan?" It is so **crisp** and **cold.**"

Dan shook his head "no."

"You don't have to eat it. Just tell me you don't like lettuce," said teacher.

Conversation in a child care center goes on from the time the children arrive in the morning until they leave in the afternoon. Children usually keep their talk on a very personal level. They are likely to ask their teacher, "What did you have for breakfast?" or "Where did you go?" They like to talk about themselves and the people at home.

They enjoy looking at pictures of themselves and talking about what they were doing when the picture was taken. When Mrs. Wilkins brought a white rabbit to school as an Easter pet, she also took photographs of the children getting acquainted with the rabbit.

"There's Fluffy. And there's me giving him a carrot." Eric squealed looking at a picture.

"Here I am holding Fluffy. Nice Fluffy," said Alice, remembering how soft and warm the bunny was.

"See, Fluffy, see yourself," Almondo held a photo in front of the rabbit cage. "See. I'm feeding you grass."

A teacher who values good speech will begin a conversation on every imaginable subject:

"See what Gary found outside his house this morning." Teacher held up an acorn. "Does anyone know what this is?"

"A pine cone," Anita said.

"It looks something like a pine cone, but it isn't. It's an acorn. An acorn is a big seed. If we plant it, an oak tree will grow from it. Remember the seeds we planted? What did we grow?"

"Flowers," said David.

The conversation continues about the plants the children had grown in the spring. Teacher used the acorn to help them recall an earlier experience. Each time a child remembers an experience and puts it into words, the experience sinks more deeply into his mind.

During free play teacher usually walks around the room, stopping for a moment to comment on Nicky's building or to tie a plastic apron on Annette before she plays in water. Teacher's conversation sounds casual, but she deliberately chooses words to encourage the children to respond:

"You think you'd like to play in water for a while, Annette."

"Yes."

"Would you like to sail this little boat in the water?"

"No. I want to wash my baby."

A trip means more to the children if they talk about it before they leave and after they come back:

"Tomorrow is a special day. We are going to visit a bakery. Does anyone know what they do at a bakery?"

No one knew.

"They bake bread at a bakery," teacher told the children. "You like to eat bread, don't you?"

"I like sandwiches," Fanny said.

"I like hamburgers," Russell added.

"We'll see them make bread and maybe

we'll also see them make hamburger rolls. I think we'll see them bake cakes too."

The day after they went to the bakery, teacher steered the conversation back to the things they had seen:

"What did you like best at the bakery, Joe?" she asked.

"Eating cake." He licked his lips.

"I liked the icing," Laurie chimed in.

"The bread smelled so good," Robert added.

The children talked about their trip to the bakery many times. Sometimes teacher showed them picture books about how bread is made. She borrowed a film from the local library on how wheat grows and how it is harvested and ground into flour. After the film they talked some more:

"What color was wheat when it grew in the farmer's field?" teacher asked.

"Green. Brown." called out two children.

"You're both right. It is green in the beginning, then it turns brown, doesn't it?"

"Do you remember what we can make out of wheat?"

"Bread," said Derek.

"Cake," added Joan.

"You're both right again. Tomorrow we will make some cakes and you can decorate them with icing like we saw them do at the bakery."

Such activities and conversations kept the memory of the bakery visit alive for the children.

Visitors can bring with them fresh ideas for conversation:

"This is Mrs. Mullens. She is a nurse who is going to help the doctor examine you in a few weeks. She wants to tell you about it."

Mrs. Mullens opened her bag and took out some tongue depressors and a doctor's light. "When you come to the clinic, the doctor will

Fears are lessened when the doctor communicates with the children.

ask you to open your mouth wide, like this. Can you all do that? Then he will put a wooden stick like this on your tongue and shine a little light in your mouth. That is how he will examine your throats. I'll show you how he'll do it."

"Will it hurt?" Alberto wanted to know.

"No, it won't hurt. But you must stand still and open your mouth real wide."

"Will he look in my ears too?" Marianne wanted to know.

"Yes, he'll put a tiny light in your ears so he can see inside. Now, I'll give each of you a tongue depressor and you can pretend some of you are doctors and some of you are children having your throats examined."

Visitors, like a public health nurse or doctor, not only bring new topics of conversation to the center, but also help prepare the children for examinations. After playing at being doctors and nurses and by talking about what is going to happen, children are not so frightened by the actual examination.

Additional illustrations of conversations with children may be found in "Teaching Young Children," by Evelyn Beyer.[3]

Children Talking Together—Everyone agrees that children learn to talk well when an adult spends a lot of time talking to them. That's fine for a mother with one or two small children. But how does a teacher with eight or ten children to look after find time to talk and listen to each one? She can't! She has to depend on the other children. Of course, teacher and her aide talk with as many individual children as they can about many subjects during the day, but much of the conversation at a child care center can be between children.

Teachers often place a child who speaks well next to one who is slow in language. "Why don't you come over here, Chris, and play boats with Arnold?" Chris is a good talker. Teacher knows that he talks to whomever is nearby. He is bound to talk to Arnold if he plays near him. Arnold may learn some new words from Chris' friendly chatter.

Sometimes teachers can suggest a make believe situation that will promote conversation among children. "Let's pretend that Charmaine has just moved here and is coming to our center for the first time. We want to be friendly and make her feel at home. George, Annie, and Fred—all of you say 'hello' to her and tell her you're happy she's here."

When several children work around a table together, the mood is right for conversation. "See my bus. Watch it go," Sally exclaims as she pushes the bus she has just made with Lego blocks across the table.

"I'm making a chair," Charles announces.

Craig, who has been pounding clay balls into flat discs, looks up. "Who wants a cookie? I made cookies. Who wants one?"

Conversations of this sort are likely to start without an adult when children are working intently together.

Adults Talking Together—There are times when adults must talk together at the center. Sometimes two teachers have to discuss an activity, or a mother may want to speak with the teacher about her child. Children often feel left out of conversations between adults. Many children become angry and show it by making noise or behaving in a way to interrupt the adults' conversation.

When a conversation between adults has to take place in the presence of the children, it should be short. Also, children are more likely to accept adult conversations if they are told about them.

Teacher can say: "Children, excuse me for a few minutes. I must talk with Mrs. Williams about our picnic tomorrow. I'll be right outside in the hall if you need me."

If Debby's mother wants to talk with the teacher, she might tell Debby: "I want to tell Miss Dodson you won't come to school tomorrow because we're going to visit Granny. Why don't you play in the sandbox while we talk?"

When longer conversations are required, they should take place while the children are napping or are occupied watching a film or listening to a story with another teacher or aide.

Sounds Lead the Way—Babies and young children love sounds. In fact, baby's first toy, a rattle, is named for the sound it makes. Toy manufacturers know how pleasing sounds are to children, and they put squeaks and tinkles into many toys. Teddy Bear grunts when you push his tummy;

[3] Pegasus, Div. of Western Publishing Co. Inc., N. Y., 1968.

roly-poly chimes when you knock him over; jack-in-the-box plays a tune before he pops open; turtle clacks when you pull him; train blows a whistle when its wheels move; and even doll talks when you pull the string.

In a way the toys are talking to the children through their different sounds. They are saying, "Listen to me. Get your ears used to hearing sounds. Sounds are important in your world." While baby squeezes a rubber mouse and laughs at the squeak it makes, his ears are getting ready to hear and understand words. His own language will come when he begins to repeat what he hears others say. Children who are aware of different sounds and enjoy hearing them are more likely to develop good speech.

Children need to recognize and talk about different sounds. There are many simple activities that can be done in a child care center to help them:

—Rhythm instruments may be made or bought. Sandpaper glued or stapled onto two wooden blocks makes a rasping sound when rubbed together. Discarded pots and pans beaten on by old wooden spoons make booming drums. Dried beans inside a metal can make the sound of a maraca. A tambourine can be made from two paper plates stapled together with beans or pebbles inside. Children enjoy making their own instruments first, then playing them in time to music.

—Glasses filled to different levels with water make tinkling sounds when tapped. Children can learn to play a tune on them.

—Glass containers of different shapes and sizes sound different notes when they are tapped.

—One teacher showed the children three items—a keyring full of keys, a beanbag, and a rubber ball. She blindfolded each child in turn then dropped one of the items. The child had to guess what she had dropped from the sound it made.

—The children are told to make appropriate sounds for each situation the teacher describes. "Baby is sleeping. We mustn't wake him up." (They whisper.) "We're in the sandbox. We want to call to Mike to tell him to come play with us. But Mike is far away." (They shout.) "We're the wind blowing through the leaves." (They blow.) "We have mud on our shoes and want to knock it off." (They stomp their feet.)

—Each child, in turn, makes a sound, and the others guess what it is.

Teachers can make up many simple games like these to help the children become aware of sounds. At this age when language is just developing, it is extremely important for children to find out how much they can learn about the world through their ears. Good teachers use sound to lead the way to good speech.

Stories—

Teacher: Little pig, little pig,
Let me come in.
Not by the hair of my . . .
Children: Chinny chin chin.
Teacher: Then I'll . . .
Children: Huff,
Teacher: And I'll . . .
Children: Puff,
Teacher: And I'll . . .
Children: Blow your house in.
Teacher: And what happened next?
Children: He blew the house in.

All the children knew the story well, so teacher had asked them to help her tell it. Whether they hear an old favorite, like "The Three Little Pigs," or a new story, the period set aside for story telling is an extra special time of the day for most children. In a child care center there is a feeling of closeness to the teacher when the children sit together on a rug and listen to teacher read or tell a story. In many homes a bedtime story is the last thing a parent and child do together before the child is tucked in for the night.

Although children of today still enjoy the same fairy tales their parents loved, today's children can gain a broad view of the real world through books. Never before have there been so many beautifully illustrated children's books available on so many different subjects. Every teacher would benefit from a visit to the public library to look at the collection of juvenile books. The children's librarian will help teachers select books that fit into other activities at the center.

If the children have just had a ride on a boat, a story like, "Little Toot" or "Boats on

the River" might help them recall their experiences. If they are learning shapes, a book like "A Kiss is Round" can lead into a conversation about things that are round. If Judy has a new baby sister, a book like "Baby Sister for Frances" might help her accept the newcomer. If a building is being constructed in the neighborhood, "Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel" would be a good way to follow up a visit to the construction site.

Children enjoy stories about children or animals they can sympathize with. "Curious George" is a favorite because children can see themselves getting into similar scrapes when their curiosity leads them to poke into new things. Perhaps one reason "The Three Little Pigs" is still loved is because children can see themselves as the young pigs who finally outsmart the big, bad wolf.

Other favorites with young children are books with rhythmic phrases repeated throughout. In "The Little Engine That Could," the engine chants, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can." After one or two readings, the children gleefully chant along with the engine to help it up the steep hill. In "Millions of Cats," the children quickly remember the lines, "hundreds of cats, thousands of cats, millions and billions and trillions of cats" that are repeated throughout the story. Dr. Seuss probably is today's master of rhythmic phrasing. Even on the first reading of "Green Eggs and Ham" many children pick up the words and chime in on "I do not like them, Sam I am."

In selecting stories for young children it is best to steer away from stories about giants and witches and monsters. Older children may enjoy such stories as "Puss in Boots" and "Hansel and Gretel." But children under the age of five are not yet clear about what is real and what is imaginary. Ogres and witches may excite the older children who know that such creatures do not exist. Younger children may be frightened by them. Stories about children, animals, and the things children know about are safer.

There has been criticism from teachers in the past that too many children's books centered on the lives of white, middle class children in the suburbs. They felt that city children, particularly black children and members of other racial minorities, were turned off by stories about a life they were unfamiliar with. Publishers now are correcting this oversight. Every year more books about minority children and life in a city become available.

"Some of the Days of Everett Anderson" is a story in rhyme about a black boy who lives in a city apartment and whose mother goes to work every day. "City Rhythms" has a special appeal for urban children. Although published in the 40's, "Two is a Team," the story of the friendship of a black and a white boy, is particularly appropriate for an interracial child care center today.

Indian children may be able to find themselves in "The Story of Little-Big" or "Little Eagle." Children in the southwest, may enjoy "Los Posadas," a story about a Mexican festival that is celebrated in conjunction with Christmas by Mexican-Americans. "Moy Moy" is about Chinese-American children and "Youngest One" about Japanese-Americans. Understanding of all ethnic groups is the theme of "What Color is Love?" Teachers may wish to ask the children's librarian at their local public library for other titles.

There are so many children's books available that some teachers think they must read a new story every day. Definitely **not!** Children love to hear a story they enjoyed read again and again. As the story becomes familiar, the meanings of the words become clearer. The vocabulary and ideas are more likely to become a part of the child's own language.

The following discussion took place with one group of children during the reading of "Curious George:"

Teacher: That's the picture of George. What's he doing?

Billy: Eating a banana.

David: And swinging.

Teacher: You know what he's swinging with?

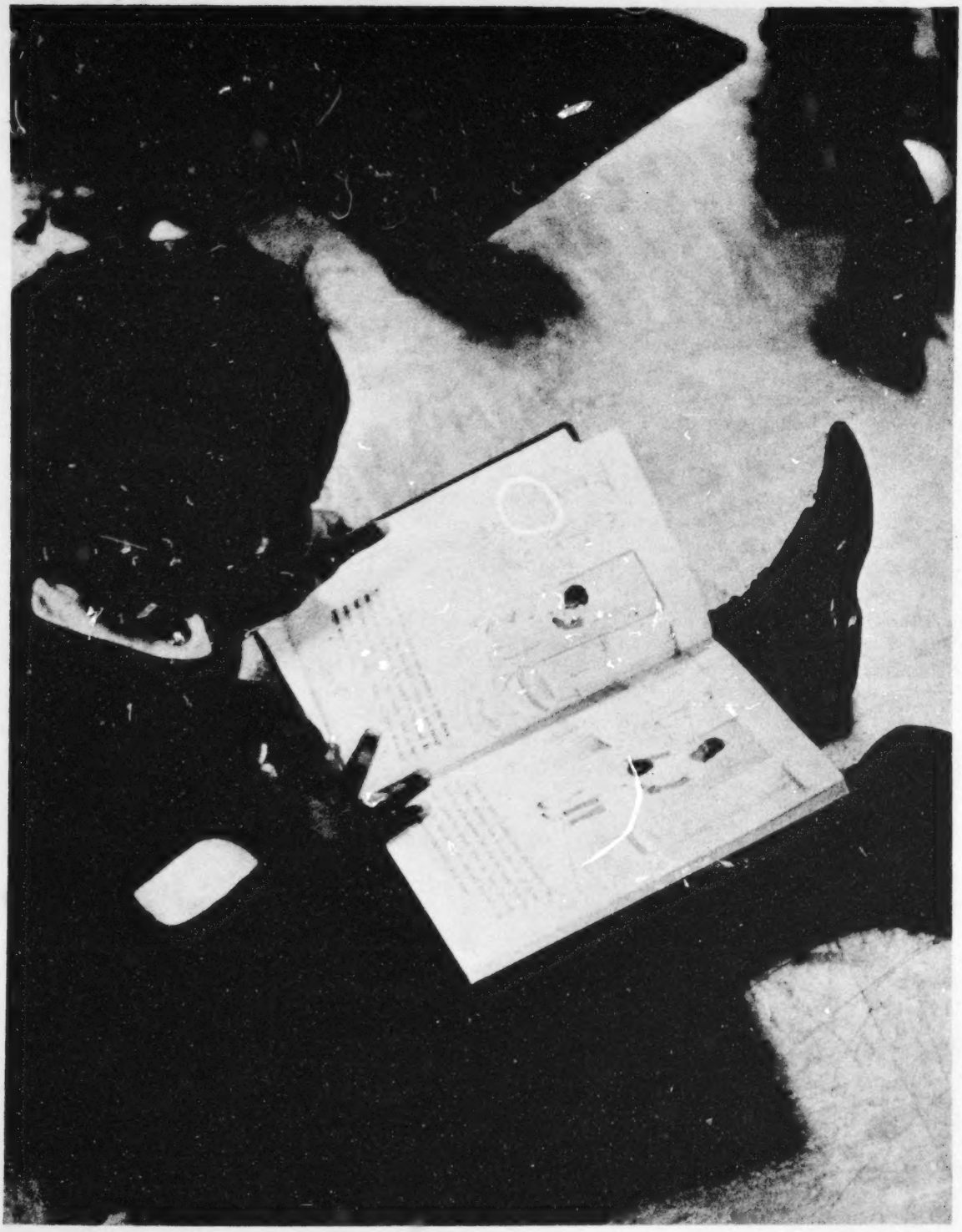
David: In a tree.

Teacher: In a tree. That's right. That's a vine growing on a tree, and he's using it for a swing.

"Curious George" was read the following week, and the teacher asked again, "What is he swinging with?" This time one child was able to answer, "He's swinging on a vine."[4]

---

[4] Virginia Stern, "The Story Reader as Teacher," **Young Children,** Vol. XXII, No. 1, October, 1966.



Young children enjoy looking at picture books and some, by the time they are four, are ready to learn to recognize letters.

Getting the Most Out of a Story—No one enjoys listening to a voice that drones on in a monotone. Therefore, if a storyteller wants to keep the children's attention, she must read or tell the story with expression. She must use a harsh voice when an angry person speaks or a weepy voice if someone in the story is crying. A high, squeaky voice may portray a mouse, but a booming voice would be better for an elephant. Much meaning is carried by the tone of the voice.

Some teachers use dolls and animals or miniature furniture to illustrate a story. When it is an old favorite, like "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," the children probably know the story well enough to place the objects in the proper setting. However, if there are too many props, there is a danger that some children will become more interested in playing with them than in paying attention to the story.

Just listening to a story may be a pleasant way to pass the time, but there is also the chance with some children that the words will go in one ear and out the other. Teachers find that children are more likely to remember the ideas and words of a story if they are expected to take some part in the telling.

"Does anyone know what that animal is? teacher asked, showing the children a picture from the story she was reading.

"An alligator," said Barny.

"Well, it's like an alligator. It's a crocodile," explained teacher. "What kind of mouth does a crocodile have?"

"A big one," called out James, working his hands together like a crocodile's mouth.

"A mouth with big teeth," added Georgine.

The attractive pictures in children's books are obvious starting points for discussions. A storyteller should show the pictures to the children and stop to talk about them.

If the story contains unfamiliar words, it is a good idea for the storyteller to interrupt the story to make sure the children understand.

"What does it mean that the cow chewed her cud? Does anybody know?"

"She eats grass," said Sharon.

"A cow is a funny animal," teacher explained. "It has two stomachs. First it eats grass, and the grass goes into one stomach. Then later, the cow brings that grass back into its mouth and chews it some more. This is called 'chewing her cud.' Can people do that?"

"We don't eat grass," Miguel observed.

"That's right. Only animals that eat grass, like cows, can chew their cuds."

Some teachers like to tell part of the story, then stop and ask the children what they think is going to happen next. This stirs the children's imaginations. If children have heard the story before, it prods their memories to try to remember what comes next.

"What happened when Goldilocks sat on the baby bear's chair?"

"It broke," the children called out together.

Another way to involve the children is to compare the action of the story with their own lives.

"Does your baby sister chew her toes like the baby in the story, Pam?"

"Do you ever help your mother clean the floors with a vacuum cleaner?"

Acting out the story after teacher has read it can help children to remember the order in which the ideas were presented, and to put these ideas into words. However, this activity probably is too complicated for three-year-olds, and even four- and five-year-olds may need teacher's help.

With a story that the children have heard many times, teacher can suggest that they tell the story together. Teacher may want to begin. Then each child has a turn to tell a bit of the story. By such methods teachers use stories to stimulate children's minds so that the story becomes a valuable learning experience.

Making Up Stories—Young children can be very creative, and many of them enjoy making up their own stories. Of course, they aren't able to write the words down yet, but they can dictate their stories to teacher, who writes them down exactly the way the children say them.

Teachers of three- and four-year-olds at the Early Childhood and Family Resource Center of the Bank Street College of Education[*], collected stories the children dictated throughout the year. Here are some of them.

About a photograph of some of the children:

"Ronnie is making a bad face. Gabriel is

[*] Bank Street College of Education, 612 W. 112th St., N. Y., N. Y. 10025.

making a smile. My name is Antonio."

About their paintings:

"A Dorothy did find no friends. And she was cryin', cryin', and cryin'. And she got afraid, and afraid, and a cruckster. And little tree with little crochees. Poor thing, poor thing."

"All those little red dots climbing over the hill and down to the water. They're going to where the water is. They go this way. This one got in the water, see. This one goes way down deep. See those brown spots. They're way under the water."

About a trip to the zoo:

"We didn't see the seals. We saw the zebra. I sat down. I looked at the birds. I was on the boat. We saw the baby cow drinking his mommy's milk. And we didn't get a balloon. I bringed out my rest mat. The end. And that's all. I saw the elephant, but he was inside the house."

Some teachers tickle children's imaginations by beginning a story and asking the children to finish it.

"Claudia got lost. She couldn't find her way home. She cried. A big boy ran down the street. He saw Claudia crying. What do you think the big boy did? Did Claudia find her way home?"

Angelo saw a sad ending to the story. "The big boy wouldn't stop, and Claudia cried some more."

A happier ending appealed to Lynette. "The big boy took her hand and took her home to her mommy."

Pictures of children and animals in realistic situations can suggest stories. Teacher shows the children a detergent advertisement from a magazine. The picture shows a mother holding up her son's muddy clothes. Through teacher's questions and the children's answers a story grows.

"How do you suppose those pants got so dirty?" teacher might begin. "I wonder if his mother scolded him for getting so muddy?"

"Her did," Brian proclaimed solemnly. "Her spanked his bottom."

"What happened then? Did the little boy cry?"

"He cried, and his mommy hollered again," Cindy added to the story.

"Then his daddy came home and gave him some candy. He got happy," Robbie ended cheerfully.

Other teachers help children build stories by supplying them with some of the words and asking them to fill in the missing ones.

"Joe went to the ..... He saw .....
He also saw ..... He ate ..... It tasted .....

Their Own Books—Many child care activities are directed toward building in young children an appreciation for language and books. The child who has a good working vocabulary and who has learned that books can be a source of pleasure is likely to move on to reading without much trouble. He will want to learn how to read because he knows the ability will open the way to more enjoyment from books.

Many teachers help children make books of their own stories and art work. The cover may be a piece of construction paper which the children decorate with crayons or pictures they cut out of magazines. Teacher punches holes on one side, and the children thread yarn through the holes to hold the pages together. Teacher prints the child's name on the cover so that he knows it is all his own. Most children are extremely proud of their first books.

Songs—It was Parents' Night at the child care center. The small chairs were arranged two by two around a table that had been decorated to look like a countryside. Toy train tracks ran around a mountain of green bath towels. A stuffed Teddy Bear sat on the mountain, and a brown paper road led to an aluminum foil lake. As the children came in, they received a ticket from teacher. They took their seats on the make-believe train and sang, "Down by the Station."

"Oh, look at that bear," exclaimed teacher. That was the signal to sing "The Bear Went over the Mountain." Then teacher pointed to the lake, and the children sang "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

"Look at the horse in the field," teacher said. "I wonder if Yankee Doodle rode him." With that cue, they sang "Yankee Doodle."

"What a darling baby asleep in the cradle. Shall we sing her a lullaby?" The children sang, "Rock-a-Bye Baby."

The children entertained their parents by doing what young children greatly enjoy doing together—singing. Most three- and four-year-olds do not speak clearly enough to recite poems or

Rhythm instruments and other sounds helps accustom children's ears to hearing and understanding words.

act out plays for an adult audience, but they do sing well together and have fun doing it.

Music seems to appeal to almost every baby and young child. A newborn infant will usually settle down to sleep if his mother rocks and sings to him. As baby grows older, he likes games that have rhythms, like "This little piggy went to market," or "Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man."

All the time baby is listening to songs and rhymes he is adding to his understanding of language. By the time he is two-and-a-half or three he is ready to take part in group singing. The first songs must be easy to remember with phrases repeated several times.

> Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb,
> Mary had a little lamb,
> Its fleece was white as snow.

In this oldtime favorite the words "little lamb" are repeated four times. It isn't long before a child who may not speak very well can pick up these words and sing them.

Songtime, like storytime, is a happy experience for most children. A feeling of closeness with teacher and with one another grows from singing together. Children enjoy moving their

Learning to listen carefully develops a child's vocabulary and understanding.

bodies to music. They can do this by acting out the words in pantomime as:

Little Jack Horner,
Sat in a corner, (they sit down)
Eating his Christmas pie;
(pretends to eat)
He put in his thumb,
(points thumb down)
And pulled out a plum,
(points thumb up)
And said, "What a good boy am I!"
(smiles happily)

Sometimes children will gallop around the room like horses while singing "Pony Boy" or scurry like mice in "Three Blind Mice." They may like to shake hands with one another as they sing "Good Morning to You." Most children enjoy dancing the easy steps to "Shoo Fly."

Action songs are good for getting acquainted. New children often are too shy to join in games and activities, but it is hard to listen to music without at least tapping a foot. Often the first time a new child will participate with the group is during an action song. Before long the frightened newcomer, who has done nothing but sit forlornly and watch the goings on, finds he is turning himself about during "Looby Lou."

Through all this singing the children are building their language ability. Children learn to understand the ideas of a song, just as they learn to follow the plot of a story. Teacher can use songs as she does stories to help children learn new words. The song "Picking up pawpaws, put them in your pocket," is well known, but how many children who sing it know that pawpaw is another name for the fruit, papaya? Although papaya grows in Hawaii, it sometimes can be found in markets in colder climates. If teacher could bring a papaya to class and show the children what it looks and tastes like, the words of the song would have more meaning to them.

Another longtime favorite, the "Eensy, Weensy Spider," delights children with its words and finger play. A teacher might want to use the song as a springboard to a discovery experience about spiders. The children and teacher can search the play yard for spiders and spider webs, and teacher may be able to find books with pictures and stories about spiders.

Teachers need not worry about teaching modern children the traditional songs they sang when they were young. Although many ex-

cellent songs for young children are available in book form today, children still love the oldtimers, like "Where is Thumbkins?" or "Did You Ever See a Lassie?" These songs are still popular today because their simple words and actions appeal to the universal needs of children of any generation. A good children's song has a lively rhythm, words the children can remember easily, and body movements even poorly coordinated children can handle.

Neither do teachers have to worry about repeating the same songs. Repetition does not upset the children. It is more upsetting for them to be expected to learn too many new songs at once. When children sing the same songs over and over again, they are able to master the words and tunes and enjoy a feeling of success. Success, in turn, contributes to a wholesome sense of their own worth.

Songtime also can be used for teacher and the children to write their own songs. They can use a familiar tune, like "Jingle Bells" or, if teacher plays the piano, she might be able to pick out an original tune.

"Let's make up a song of our very own for the Halloween party," teacher suggested. "How about this for a start. (to the tune of "Jingle Bells") Halloween, Halloween . . . who can give me the next line?"

"Spooky Halloween," sang out Jeromy.

"Good. Now we need a long line. What are you going to do on Halloween?"

"I'm gonna be a monkey," said Dorothy.

"I'm gonna be Batman," added Vincent.

"I'm gonna say 'tricks or treats,'" called out Billy.

"Hold on a minute," laughed teacher. "Let's get these ideas together." She thought a moment. "How's this? 'Monkeys and Batmen in the streets saying tricks or treats.' That sounds good. Let me write it down so we won't forget it."

With teacher's guidance in rearranging their thoughts to fit the music, the children wrote their own Halloween song. At the party they sang it for the other children at the center.

Equipment to Promote Communication—Although every situation in a child care center can lead to conversation, there is some equipment that naturally stimulates the children to talk together. Toy telephones are found in nearly every nursery school and kindergarten, but there must be at least two of them so that a two-way conversation can take place.

Playhouses large enough for a few children to fit inside encourage them to talk among themselves. Two-story playhouses are especially fun for children find it exciting to call up or down to someone higher or lower. Some centers have built balconies or platforms into the rooms to provide different levels to stimulate communication.

Children talk to one another when they play games that require cooperation. Boxes or planks of wood that are too large for one child to move are no fun unless two children work together to move them. That means that if Teddy wants to build a garage for his tricycle, he has to use words to ask Pedro to help him.

Looking Forward to Written Words—During the years children spend in a child care center the emphasis naturally is on learning the words they need to express themselves clearly. There is no rush to teach children this young to recognize letters. However, some children of four are interested in letters. They look at books and run to teacher to ask her what this or that letter is. Five-year-olds are expected to learn their letters and numbers in kindergarten. Therefore, it is a good idea to get four-year-olds used to seeing printed letters, even though they are not expected to learn them.

Teachers always print the childrens' names on their art work. Many teachers also identify the cubbies with each child's name as well as his picture. One teacher helped her children learn to recognize their own names by printing each name on a colored tag and hanging them on a pegboard. When the child arrived in the morning, he turned over his tag to show he was present.

An old typewriter can be helpful for children who are interested in learning letters. If the shift key is set to print capital letters, the letters on the paper will look like those on the keys. Teacher will have to instruct the children in how to insert and remove the paper and how to hit only one key at a time. Not every child is mature enough to handle a typewriter without jamming it. Teacher will have to explain that it is a privilege to use the typewriter and only those who will follow her directions can be permitted to use it.

Communication begins with a baby's first cries. Learning to talk is part of a normal child's natural development, like learning to sit up, or walk, or use the toilet. When the child grows older and finds out he cannot communicate all his ideas by crying or using body movements, he wants to learn to talk so that he can communicate better with the people around him. He wants them to share his observations, listen to his questions, and respond to his requests for help in meeting his needs.

The ability to communicate develops naturally when it is part of everything a child does with other children and grownups. A close family life—one in which the children are encouraged to speak up about what they want, how they feel, what they have done and seen and heard, and what they want to do—is the kind of relationship that leads to the ability to communicate.

However, communication means both giving and receiving information. At least two people are involved—one to communicate, the other to understand and respond. When a baby cries in hunger, but his mother ignores his cries, he is not communicating. When a child tells about the bird's nest he found, but there is no one to listen, he is not communicating.

Parents and teachers who are concerned with helping children learn to communicate with others know that language isn't very useful without someone to listen. They give children every opportunity to talk. At the same time, they show they are interested in what the children have to say by paying attention to them, sharing their own experiences with them, and meeting their needs.

Many of today's problems have come about because there has been too little communication among different groups within our population. The people in need called out for help, but those who could help did not hear. Perhaps, if our children learn both to communicate clearly and to listen attentively, as adults they will be able to communicate with one another to bring about a better tomorrow.

Bibliography of Children's Books Named in this Booklet

Anglund, Joan Walsh, **What Color is Love?,** (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1966).
Beim, Lorraine and Jerrold, **Two is a Team,** (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1945).
Beyer, Ernestine Cabern, **The Story of Little-Big,** (Chicago: Reilly and Lee, 1962).
Budney, Blossom, **A Kiss is Round,** (New York: Lothrop, Lee, and Shephard, 1954).
Burton, Virginia, L., **Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel,** (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1939).
Clifton, Lucille, **Some of the Days of Everett Anderson,** (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1970).
De Grazia, Nick and Fraser, James, **Los Posadas,** (Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1963).
Deming, Therese O. and Shaw, Thelma, **Little Eagle,** (River Forest: Laidlaw, 1958).
Flack, Marjorie, **Boats on the River,** (New York: Viking Press, 1946).
Ga'g Wanda, **Millions of Cats,** (New York: Coward-McCann, 1928).
Geisel, Theodor Seuss, **Green Eggs and Ham,** (New York: Beginning Books, 1960).
Gramatky, H., **Little Toot,** (Eau Claire: Hale, 1939).
Grifalconi, Ann, **City Rhythms,** (Indianapolis: Bobs-Merril, 1965).
Hoban, Russell, **Baby Sister for Frances,** (New York: Harper and Row, 1964).
Piper, Watty, **The Little Engine That Could,** (Eau Claire: Hale, 1930).
Potiti, Leo, **Moy Moy,** (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1960).
Rey, H. A., **Curious George,** (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1941).
Yashima, Taro, **Youngest One,** (New York: Viking, 1962).

☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1973 O—500-794